

## **FORAGE SUITABILITY GROUP**

**Loamy, Dry “LRU I” (AWC 3-6")**

**15 - 19” ppt & < 70 Freeze Free Days**

**FSG No.: GO49XI019WY**

**Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) :** 49 – Southern Rocky Mountain Foothills

### **Physiographic Features**

The majority of this area is in farms and ranches. The remainder, approximately one-fifth of the area is federally owned. The elevation ranges from 5,557 to 7,874 feet (1,700 to 2,400 meters). The rugged hills and low mountains are in narrow bands along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. They are strongly dissected and in many places are crossed by large streams flowing eastward from the Rocky Mountains. The grassland and woodlands are grazed. Hay, Pasture, and feed grains are grown in irrigated valleys, which make up less than 5 per cent of the total area. There is a small amount of land that is in dryland wheat. Water is scarce and ground water supplies are meager and little developed. Most of the area is used for cattle and sheep grazing with some hay and pasture along the streams. The major streams crossing the area provide irrigation water for narrow belts of cropland in the valleys.

### **Climatic Features**

Annual precipitation ranges from 5 - 20 inches per year. The precipitation is low in the winter months increasing in the spring to mid summer and then decreases in the autumn.

Temperatures are subject to wide ranges, both seasonal and day to night. The high elevation of the plains and the dry air in this area permit large amounts of incoming and outgoing radiation, giving rise to warm days and cool nights. Late spring and early fall freezes are common, because of the cold air outbreaks from Canada, high elevation and rapid nighttime cooling. Sunshine is quite abundant with few days during the year without some sunshine.

This is in Land Resource Area “I”. The precipitation in this LRU is 15 to 19 inches and has a freeze free period of less than 70 days.

There is a wide variation in freeze free days and precipitation in this MLRA. Please be sure and visit with the local field office for site specific climatic information that is available in the Field Office Technical Guide, Section I, Climatic Data, <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/> or refer to the National Water and Climate Center web page at <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>.

### **Soil Interpretations**

This group consists of deep, medium textured soils. The loam soils tend to be mellow and are easily worked, and have a pore-size distribution that results in good water retention and aeration. These soils have a water holding capacity (AWC) of 3 to 6 inches in 60 inches of root depth. They have few limitations for the management and growth of adapted plants. The permeability class ranges from slow to moderately rapid.

The soil survey maps were completed for the purposes of developing plans for tracts of land and can not be used to determine the soils on or the suitability of a specific site. Consequently, small areas of significantly different soils are not identified on the maps and may occur in any map unit.

Refer to Appendix A, Forage Suitability Group Rules in Section II, of the Field Office Technical Guide, Pastureland and Hayland Interpretations for the parameters used in grouping the soils.

## **Soil Map Unit List**

For a complete listing of soil components and what Forage Suitability Group the soil is in, refer to Appendix B, Section II of the Field Office Technical Guide, Pastureland and Hayland Interpretations.

## **Adapted Species List**

Refer to Appendix C, Adapted Species for Forage Suitability Groups in Section II of the Field Office Technical Guide, Pastureland and Hayland Interpretations or access the electronic adapted species list at [http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/WY/15-19\\_INCH\\_PRECIPITATION\\_ZONE\\_ADAPTED\\_SPECIES\\_MATRIX\\_49\\_APPENDIX\\_C.pdf](http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/WY/15-19_INCH_PRECIPITATION_ZONE_ADAPTED_SPECIES_MATRIX_49_APPENDIX_C.pdf). Additional information concerning plant characteristics of a number of the listed species as well as individual cultivars of many of those species can be accessed on the web at <http://plants.usda.gov>.

## **Production Estimates**

Production estimates are based on management intensity (fertility regime, irrigation water management, harvest timing, etc.) and should be considered as estimates only. The estimates should only be used for making general management recommendations. On site production information should always be used for making detailed planning and management recommendations when available.

The high forage production estimates listed below are based on dense, vigorous stands of climatically adapted, superior performing cultivars. They are properly fertilized for high yields, and pest infestations are kept below economic thresholds. Mechanical harvests are managed to maintain stand life by cutting at appropriate stages of maturity and harvest intervals. If grazed, optimum beginning and ending grazing heights are adhered to. Adequate time is allowed for plant recovery before entering winter dormancy under both uses.

The production estimates listed below represent total annual above ground plant production on an air-dry-matter basis. Production on pastures in many instances is species dependent and depends if the pasture is a single species pasture or a mixture of grass species. To convert the information below to AUM's (Animal Unit Months), multiply the pounds per acre by 35 per cent and then divide by 790 (example: assume 2,800 pounds per acre:  $2,800 \times .35 \div 790 = 1\frac{1}{4}$  AUM's).

**Irrigation:** The expected production for grass would be from 2,000 to 4,000 pounds per acre. The expected production for legumes would range from 2 to 3 tons per acre.

**Dryland:** The expected production for grass would be from 800 to 1,400 pounds per acre. The expected production for legumes would range from 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 tons per acre.

## **Forage Growth Curves**

### **LRU I**

**Growth Curve Number:** WY0012

**Growth Curve Name:** Cool Season Grass

**Growth Curve Description:** Dryland (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	5	35	40	10	5	5	0	0	0

**Growth Curve Number:** WY0013  
**Growth Curve Name:** Cool Season Grass  
**Growth Curve Description:** Irrigated (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	5	20	40	20	10	5	0	0	0

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**Growth Curve Number:** WY0003  
**Growth Curve Name:** Legumes  
**Growth Curve Description:** Irrigated (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	10	25	15	20	15	15	0	0	0

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**Growth Curve Number:** WY0004  
**Growth Curve Name:** Legumes/Cool Season Grass  
**Growth Curve Description:** Irrigated (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	10	30	15	20	15	10	0	0	0

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**Growth Curve Number:** WY0014  
**Growth Curve Name:** Legumes  
**Growth Curve Description:** Dryland 1 cutting (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	5	25	25	15	20	10	0	0	0

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**Growth Curve Number:** WY0015  
**Growth Curve Name:** Legumes  
**Growth Curve Description:** Dryland 2 cuttings (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	5	20	25	15	25	10	0	0	0

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**Growth Curve Number:** WY0004  
**Growth Curve Name:** Legumes/Cool Season Grass  
**Growth Curve Description:** Dryland (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0	15	25	30	15	5	10	0	0	0

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**Growth Curve Number:** WY0005  
**Growth Curve Name:** Warm Season Grass  
**Growth Curve Description:** Dryland (15 – 19” precipitation)

**Percent Production by Month**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	0		10	40	35	15		0	0	0

## Management

The relationship between soils, vegetation and climate on any given site is historically driven by the ability of the plants to grow and change as conditions warrant and has allowed various species to express themselves naturally. Under agronomic conditions, production-enhancing practices have altered the original limits of the biomass production. The modification of growth factors, customized selection of species and wise use of a variety of management practices have the potential to produce yields and quality far superior to those found in the native state.

These soils when in forage management system should see organic matter at a steady or a slowly climbing state. If erosion from either wind or water is a concern, the current erosion prediction tool should be used to ensure that the erosion concern is addressed properly. Refer to the pasture and hayland planting standard or the forage harvest standard in the Field Office Technical Guide, Section IV for further management information.

## FSG Documentation

### Data References:

Agriculture Handbook 296 - Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas  
Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Water and Climate Center (NWCC)  
National Soil Survey Center, National Soil Information System (NASIS)  
National Range and Pasture Handbook  
Natural Resources Conservation Service, Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)  
Various Agriculture Research Service (ARS), Cooperative Extension Service (CES), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) information on plant trials for adaptation and production.  
"Dryland Pastures in Montana and Wyoming" Species and Cultivars, Seeding Techniques and Grazing Management, Montana State University, EB19

### State Correlation:

This site has been correlated with the following states:

### Forage Suitability Group Approval:

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Original Date: 8/27/02  
Approval by: Paul Shelton  
Approval Date: 9/24/03